

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Health Department Teen Health Expo Presents Important Resources, Services Offered to Young Adults**

The Howard County Health Department and its Teen Health Matters staff hosted a Teen Health Expo Friday, July 20, 2018 at the Mall in Columbia. This free event provided an opportunity for teens and parents to learn about the services provided by the Health Department, specifically geared toward young adults.

“Today was an exciting opportunity to meet teens and their parents in the community and to provide resources to help everyone live healthier lives,” said Dr. Maura Rossman, Howard County Health Officer. “Communicating the importance of wellness in developing teens not only makes them aware of critical services available now, but can better prepare them for a lifetime of healthy living.”

During the expo, teens had the opportunity to learn about mental health awareness, tobacco cessation, cancer prevention, healthy living habits and other wellness topics relevant to adolescents. The Health Department Healthmobile was also on site to provide free, confidential STI (sexually transmitted infections) and HIV testing. Attendees received a free Teen Wellness Pack, including a free giveaway item and health resources, plus they had the opportunity to enter into gift card raffles.

“The Teen Health Expo was held to bring prevention and wellness messages, as well as available services information, to teens in an accessible, familiar place,” said Dr. Jacqueline Dougé, Child Health Bureau Medical Director.

The Health Department provides a number of services to specifically address and protect the health needs of today’s teenagers, including mental health support, STD awareness programs and vaccination clinics.

In Howard County, 11 percent of parents said that their child was diagnosed with either depression or anxiety (2016 Howard County Health Assessment). Anyone experiencing dangerous thoughts of depression or anxiety or anyone concerned about a friend/family member should dial 211 (MD Crisis Connect) for 24/7 support or call the Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202 for resources and referral services.

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During 2016 in Howard County, youth ages 15-19 represented only 6 percent of the population, but were disproportionately affected by STIs. In fact, 29 percent of youth ages 15-19 tested positive for chlamydia and 14 percent for gonorrhea. For all individuals who are sexually active – particularly young people – STI screening and prompt treatment are critical to protect one's health and prevent transmission to others. The Howard County Health Department provides free screening and treatment for those under 21 years of age. Call 410-313-7500 to learn more about the screening or to schedule an appointment.

The Health Department offers many of the vaccinations recommended by the CDC for teenagers, including some required by Howard County Public Schools. Vaccines available for students, grades 7-11 include: MCV4 (Meningitis), HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) and Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis).

For more information about the Child Health Bureau and the services it offers, call 410-313-7500 or visit [www.hchealth.org](http://www.hchealth.org).

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